

Case 3233

***Achatina janii* De Betta & Martinati, 1855 (currently *Cecilioides janii*; Mollusca, Gastropoda): proposed conservation of the specific name**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to conserve the specific name of *Achatina janii* De Betta & Martinati, 1855 for a subterranean, eyeless pulmonate gastropod (family FERUSSACIIDAE) from southern Europe. The name has been used consistently but is threatened by the subjective synonym *Achatina veneta* Strobel, 1855 which appeared only a few days earlier and which has remained virtually unused since publication. It is proposed that the latter specific name be suppressed.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Mollusca; Gastropoda; FERUSSACIIDAE; *Cecilioides janii*; *Cecilioides veneta*; southern Europe.

1. O.F. Müller (1774) established a new species of subterranean and eyeless pulmonate gastropod from Germany as *Buccinum acicula*. The taxon, currently known as *Cecilioides acicula*, is now recognised as widespread in Europe (family FERUSSACIIDAE). De Cristofori & Jan (1832) subsequently described the same species under the name *Columna aciculoides* (see para. 2 below). This name was used by later authors for a second, more local, species from northern Italy. The second species, currently known as *Cecilioides janii* (De Betta & Martinati, 1855) (see paras. 2 and 3 below), is also subterranean and eyeless but its shell is larger and broader and has a larger aperture. It is now known from southern Europe.

2. De Betta (1852) redescribed the species *aciculoides* De Cristofori & Jan, 1832 and placed it in *Achatina* Lamarck, 1799. As Giusti (1976) demonstrated, from De Betta's publication it is clear that his specimens represented the smaller, widespread species, i.e. *acicula* Müller. De Betta (1852, pp. 76–77) noted that he had sent some of his material to Jan, and that Jan had confirmed that it was identical to his own. Thus, the name *aciculoides* became a junior subjective synonym of *acicula*. However, in an unfortunate transfer of names, De Betta (1852) and De Betta & Martinati (1855) applied the name *acicula* to the larger, broader and more restricted species (De Betta, 1852, figs. 2a and b) and *aciculoides* to the smaller, widespread one (figs. 3a and b). In 1864, De Betta reversed his use of names, adopting *acicula* (with *aciculoides* as a synonym) for the widespread species and, with a detailed description and illustration (pp. 555–558, pl. 14, figs. 4–6), *Achatina janii* Betta & Martinati, 1855 for the more restricted one. This nomenclature has been followed by virtually all subsequent authors (see para. 5 below).

3. The specific name of *Achatina janii* was made available as a conditional replacement name (Articles 11.5.1 and 12.2.3 of the Code) in a nomenclatural note by De Betta & Martinati (1855, p. 59). They pointed out that, since the name *aciculoides*

(following the correct usages of Charpentier and Pfeiffer) was a junior synonym of *acicula* Müller, 1774 (para. 2 above), a new name would be required for the larger, more restricted species. The name *janii* was adopted later in the same year by Strobel (1855b), who referred to De Betta & Martinati's (1855) work, and by De Betta & Martinati in Massalongo (1861).

4. In 2000, Bank, Falkner & Gittenberger published a paper on the nomenclature of species of *Cecilioides* Férussac, 1814 from the Italian and Swiss Alps. They argued that a new name must be adopted for the larger and broader species currently named *C. janii*. This arose because Bank et al., 'digging in the old literature', had discovered an older name for the species, *Achatina veneta*, which was first introduced in the synonymy of *Achatina aciculoides* auctt. in a paper by Strobel (1855a, p. 137) published a few days before that by De Betta & Martinati (1855) in which *Achatina janii* was established. The papers by De Betta & Martinati (1855) and Strobel (1855a) were both published in February. The title page of De Betta & Martinati's paper records publication as 'Febbrajo 1855' and Strobel, p. 144, notes 'Dispensato nel 2 mese del 1855'. That the name *A. veneta* appeared earlier than *A. janii* is shown by the reference in De Betta & Martinati (1855, p. 59, footnote) to Strobel's work. As Bank et al. (2000) noted, although published in synonymy, the specific name of *Achatina veneta* is available under Article 11.6.1 of the Code, having been adopted before 1961 by some authors as a valid name (see, for example, Strobel, 1857, p. 248; Küster, 1879, p. 93; and Riezler, 1929, p. 161). Bank et al. (2000) asserted that the specific name of *Cecilioides veneta* 'cannot be suppressed in favour of *janii*' because both conditions of Article 23.9.1 of the Code had not been met in that the junior name *janii* had not been used in at least 25 works in the preceding 50 years, and the senior name *veneta* had not been used since 1899, having been adopted by Pilsbry in 1908 and by Thorson in 1930.

5. On investigation we have found that the name *Cecilioides janii* has been used in at least 27 publications by 33 different authors between 1971 and 1999. The publications include those by Kerney & Cameron (1979) and subsequent Dutch (1980), German (1983) and French (1999) translations, Cossignani & Cossignani (1995), Giusti, Manganelli & Schembri (1995), Manganelli, Bodon, Favilli & Giusti (1995), Goto & Poppe (1996), Bole & Slapnik (1998), Turner et al. (1998), and by two of the authors themselves of the proposed name change (Bank, 1985, p. 68 and Falkner, 1990, p. 168, fig. 5). A complete list of the works is held by the Commission Secretariat. We also found that in one of the two examples given by Bank et al. (2000) of putative usage of *C. veneta* since 1899 the name was not adopted as valid. Pilsbry (1908, pp. 22–23) cited *Achatina veneta* 'Charp[entier], Kuester, Neunter Bercht. naturforsch. Ges. Bamberg, 1870, p. 93' in the list of synonyms of *A. janii* and specified that, since he had not had access to De Betta's (1864) 'Esame critico' in which he (De Betta) figured the species, he used Westerlund's account which in its turn, as Pilsbry noted, 'seems to have been taken mainly from Kuester's article of 1870, which was the first critical discussion of the species'. Pilsbry concluded, reporting a sentence from Küster (1870): 'One might say that this species [*Acicula gredleri* Küster, 1870] represents a shortened widened *aciculoides*, just as *veneta* seems to be a derivative of *acicula*'. In the second example of *veneta* usage cited by Bank et al. (2000),

Thorson (1930, p. 229) considered *C. veneta* to be a local variety from Trento of *C. aciculoides* auctt.

6. The 4th Edition of the Code, which was published in 1999 and came into force in January 2000, puts stronger emphasis on stability in nomenclature than did previous editions. Thus, even if Bank et al. (2000) believed that the conditions of Article 23.9.1 (Reversal of Precedence) had not been met for the 'automatic' conservation of *Cecilioides jani* (cf. para. 4 above; Article 23.9.1 is not concerned with suppression), they should not have resurrected the name *Achatina veneta* in place of *C. jani*. Instead, they should have maintained the use of the latter name and applied to the Commission for its conservation. Bank et al. appear to have overlooked Article 23.9.3 which states that 'If the conditions of 23.9.1 are not met but nevertheless an author considers that the use of the older synonym or homonym would threaten stability or universality or cause confusion, and so wishes to maintain use of the younger synonym or homonym, he or she must refer the matter to the Commission for a ruling under the plenary power. While the case is under consideration use of the junior name is to be maintained'. We now propose that, for the sake of stability, the name *Achatina jani* De Betta & Martinati, 1855 be conserved by the suppression of the slightly earlier but virtually unused name *A. veneta* Strobel, 1855. To our knowledge, in addition to Bank et al. (2000) the latter name has been used only twice in the recent literature (Eikenboom, 1996 and Falkner, Bank & Proschwitz, 2001). Its adoption would cause considerable and unnecessary confusion.

7. Bank et al. (2000, p. 100) selected a shell of *Cecilioides jani* figured by Giusti (1976, p. 236, fig. 29A) as the 'lectotype' of both *C. jani* and *C. veneta*, supposedly rendering the names objective synonyms. The specimen selected is very probably one of De Betta and Martinati's original syntypes of *Achatina jani*, collected by De Betta and preserved in the De Betta collection in the Museo di Storia Naturale di Verona and is isolated in a glass tube with a label with a red corner stating LECTOTYPE in capital letters. It is not a specimen of Strobel's original material of *veneta*, which consists of a mixture of a number of shells of *C. acicula* and *C. jani* in the Museo di Storia Naturale del Dipartimento di Biologia Evolutiva e Funzionale dell'Università degli Studi di Parma. The lectotype designation is therefore valid for *C. jani* but not for *C. veneta*, and the names *jani* and *veneta* are subjective synonyms.

8. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power to suppress the name *veneta* Strobel, 1855, as published in the binomen *Achatina veneta*, for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *jani* De Betta & Martinati, 1855, as published in the binomen *Achatina jani* and as defined by the lectotype (specimen labelled LECTOTYPE on a label with a red corner in the De Betta collection in the Museo di Storia Naturale di Verona and figured by Giusti, 1976, p. 236, fig. 29A) designated by Bank, Falkner & Gittenberger (2000);
- (3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *veneta* Strobel, 1855, as published in the binomen *Achatina veneta* and as suppressed in (1) above.

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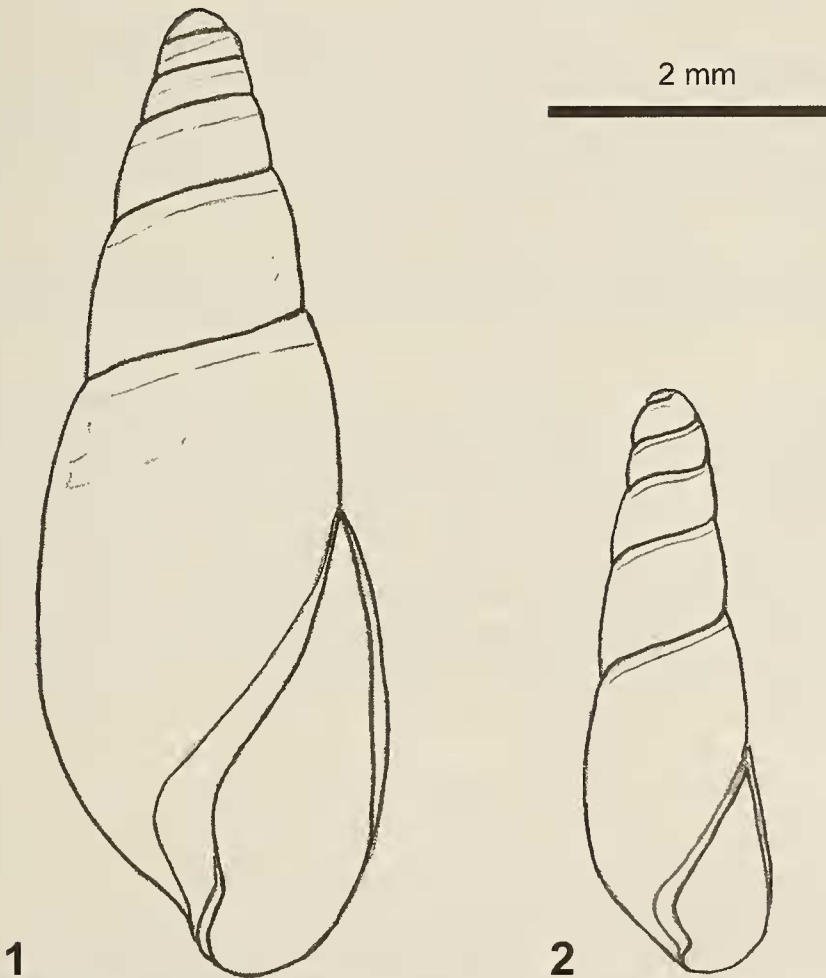
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The lectotype of *Ceciloides janii* (De Betta & Martinati, 1855) (fig. 1) and a shell of *C. acicula* (O.F. Müller, 1774) (fig. 2). Both specimens were collected in the Val di Non, northern Italy, by E. De Betta and published in his 1852 monograph as *Achatina acicula* and *A. aciculoides* respectively; they are kept in the Museo Civico di Storia Naturale di Verona.